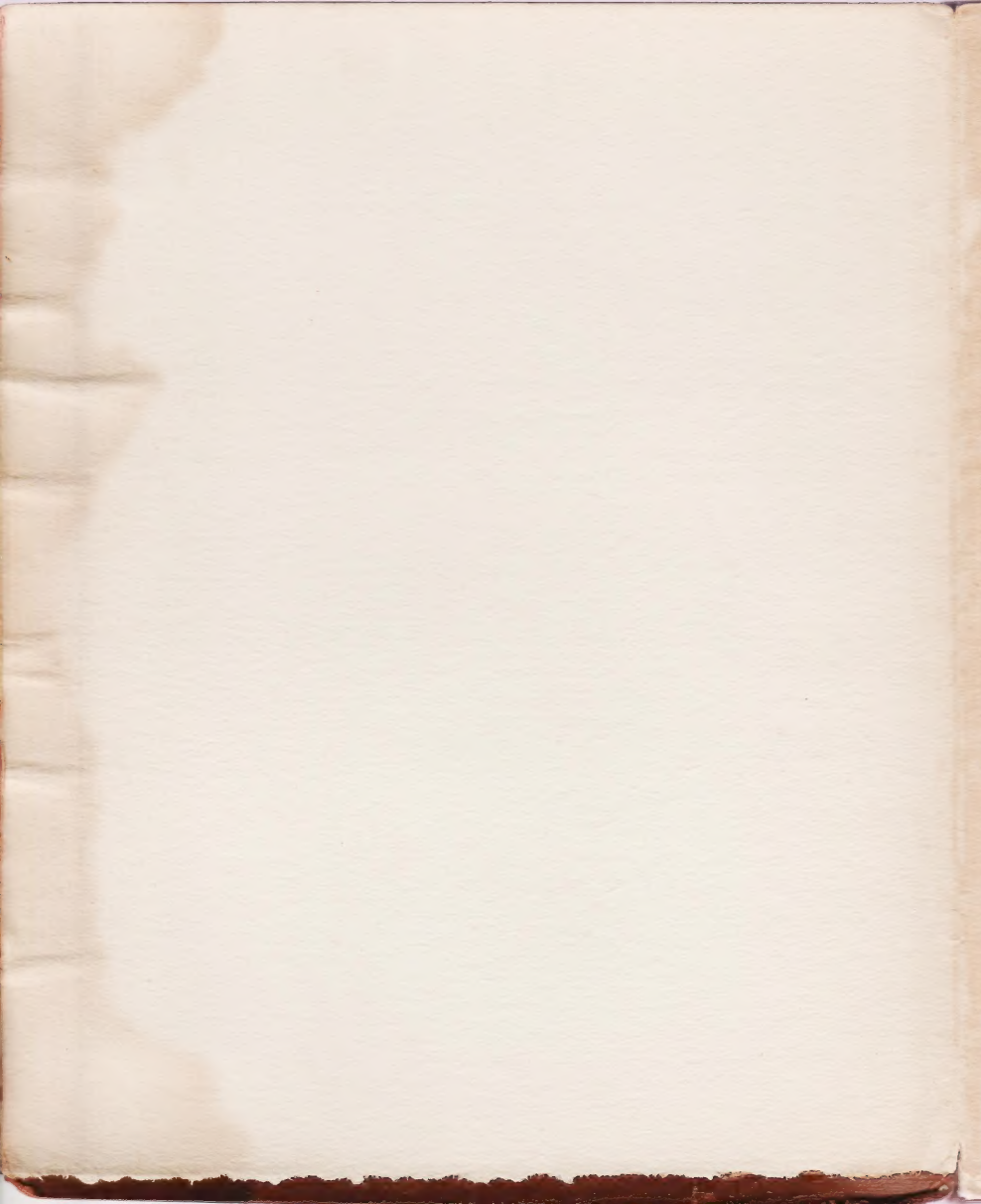
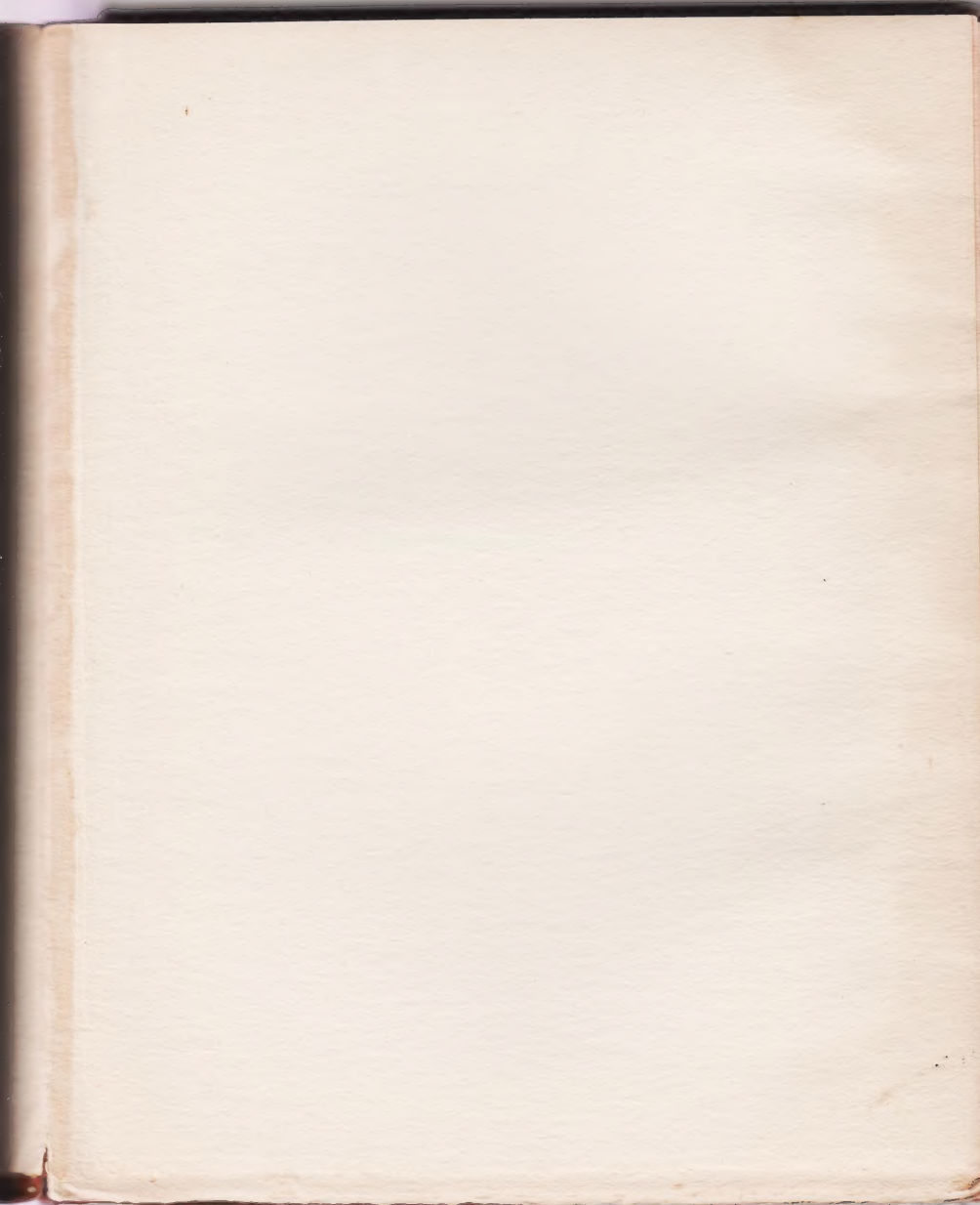


The Castle

and Other Verses

CELIA CONGREVE





THE CASTLE

AND OTHER VERSES.

TO
WALTER.

THE CASTLE

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

CELIA CONGREVE

LONDON

ARTHUR L. HUMPHREYS

187 PICCADILLY, W.

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THE CASTLE

AND OTHER VERSES.

The Castle.

THE Castle stands on its lonely rock
In a sweep of the northern sea,
And all around the grey dunes lie,
And the waters creep, and the seagulls fly,
And the mists drift dreamily.

Where the sheer rock falls on the landward side
To the grey-green field below
(When rich red roses bloom in the south,
And the wild bee hangs at the woodbine's mouth)
The yellow tansies grow.

The tansy yellow is harsh and cold,
And cold is the light of the sun;
For the bleak winds rob him of half his power,
He reigns but a brief midsummer hour
And the northern summer's done.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Yet I love the Castle old and grim,
And I dream when far away
Of the long grey dunes and the wide grey sea,
And the breath of the north wind keen and free,
And the seaweed smell from the bay.

Lindisfarne, 1910.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

When I am Dead . . .

'Donnez-moi en sourires pendant ma vie ce que vous me
donneriez en souvenirs après ma mort.'

WHEN I am dead, forget me, dear,
For I shall never know,
Though o'er my cold and lifeless hands
Your burning tears should flow;
I'll cancel with my living voice
The debt you'll owe the dead—
Give me the love you'd show me then,
But give it now instead.

And bring no wreaths to deck my grave,
For I shall never care,
Though all the flowers I loved the most
Should glow and wither there;
I'll sell my chance of all the flowers
You'll lavish when I'm dead
For one small bunch of violets now—
Give that to me instead.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

What saints we are when we are gone!
But what's the use to me
Of praises written on my tomb
For other eyes to see?
One little simple word of praise
By lips we worship said,
Is worth a hundred epitaphs—
Dear,—say it now instead.

And faults that now are hard to bear
Oblivion then shall win;
Our sins are soon forgiven us
When we no more can sin.
But any bitter thought of me—
Keep it for when I'm dead—
I shall not know, I shall not care,
Forgive me now instead.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES

The Dead Lover.

WHEN first we were parted you often came
To kneel by my grave—and you even cried.
You planted violets over my head—
But it's nearly a year since the violets died.

Instead of them now the grass grows tall
And moss unchecked creeps over the stone,
And I listen in vain for your light footfall
As I lie in the darkness alone—alone.

I never asked much of you, oh my sweet,
While I lived—shall I blame you now that I'm
dead?
My heart was at rest at your beautiful feet,
Contented with all that you did and you said.

We have gone to our places as all must do—
I to the dark, and you to the sun.
It's enough to know that you still are you—
And you, for me, are the only one.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

In time you may almost forget my name,
I'll be just a poor lover of long ago ;
But I hold you, Sweetheart, all the same,
You will always be mine—though you may not
 know.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

O weep not . . .

'Ne pleure pas, toi que j'aimais,
Ce qui n'est plus, ne fut jamais.'

O H, weep not, love, beloved of yore—
False fairy gold is memory's store
That never was—which is no more.

Bend not in woe that charming head,
For idle were the words we said,
Love never lived—if Love is dead.

What power in love has oath or vow?
Let us be honest and allow
Love's whole eternity is—Now.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

To a Butterfly in Bond Street.

'TWAS on a blazing July day
In time of summer sales.
In all the windows great display
Of ribbons, sunshades, veils,
As well as garments lacy-white,
All one can need by day or night.

The town all baked and burned and dry
Could no more heat retain.
One saw it quivering up and up
Back to the sun again.
Yet London dames and country cousins
Were bargain hunting in their dozens.

They crowded on the narrow walk ;
And in the narrow street
The motors and the taxi-cabs
Were adding to the heat,—
When suddenly there drifted by
A poor white wandering butterfly.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

I watched him stay his aimless flight
Then circle round and drop
To some red roses in a hat,
A realistic crop—
The most expensive Paris make—
Don't scorn the butterfly's mistake!

I turned my head in passing by,
Saw him alight and cling
Just on the biggest ~~and~~ reddest rose,
The poor bewildered thing!
But passed along and left him there—
No longer could I stand and stare.

Oh think of it! To see a rose
Amid those alien ways,
Those unfamiliar scents and sounds,
A friend from happier days.
With what relief to it you'd hie
If you were just a butterfly?

To float into another world
Of dewy fragrance sweet,
To feel the petals satin-smooth
Beneath your clinging feet;

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

To leave the turmoil and the fret,—
Creep to its cool heart—and forget

Alas! your gentle dream soon died,
Like many a greater dream,
Poor little atom borne along
On life's huge hurrying stream;
But one who saw you heaved a sigh
Of pity for you—butterfly!

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

The Tramp.

THE long road lies before me,
And the cloudy heavens are o'er me,
And this journey—never ending—
Is the only life for me.
For the road winds on for ever,
And my feet may leave it never
Till they're straitly laid together
In the sleep that sets us free.

The little town grows nearer
And the buildings stand out clearer,
Soon I'll see the glowing casements
And the happy lights behind.
And I ponder, dully grieving
O'er a past there's no retrieving,
On the story of those shadows,
The shadows on the blind.

The little parlour holds them
And the shining soft enfolds them
To my fancy, as a mother holds
Her baby to her breast;

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Oh! Love must there be dwelling
And peace beyond all telling
And more than all—poor wanderer
Those shadows, they have rest.

Yet—perchance there may be aching
Hearts among them, almost breaking,
Tempest-torn with doubts and passions
Sick with many a longing vain.
While the years stretch out unending
Of some life that's hurt past mending
Like the road that I am wending
In the darkness and the rain.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

A Rune of Hospitality.

(From the Gaelic.)

I SAW a stranger yestere'en,—
For him I did prepare,—
Food I put in the eating place,
Drink I put in the drinking place,
Music in the listening place,—
That he should find them there.

In the sacred name of the Triune God
He blessed my home and me,
My children, wife, and dear ones all,
My cattle in the field or stall,
So lovingly he blessed us all
In the name of the Blessed Three.

Anon the Lark sang in the sky,
And the words of her song were wise,
'Often, often, often,
Goes the Christ in the stranger's guise.'

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

The Fairy-Story Princess's Song.

WHEN I kept my very first birthday
The sun and the moon came down,
The moon she gave me a silver scarf
And the sun a golden gown.
I only wear my golden gown when I've to be
smartly dressed.
But my silver scarf is for every day
And I like it much the best.

My dress is woven of sunshine
And it glitters all day so bright :
But my scarf of silvery moonbeams
Is lovelier far by night.
The Fairy Queen's best milliner made my
glorious gown of gold.
But the moon she knitted my silvery scarf
With her silvery fingers cold.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

The sun loves pomp and splendour
He shines on my golden gown,
He makes my jewels sparkle
When I ride in state through town,
But oh for a night with the silver moon on
 her silver silver throne !
Then I turn my back on the pomp and state
And I dance for her alone.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

The Irish Night Mail.

THE north-country station is cheerless and
grim,

The lamps in the hot, stuffy darkness burn dim.

All is silent—deserted—the slow moments creep,

Day's traffic is over, the world is asleep.

A sound in the distance! a sound faint and small—

How it grows and it grows till it dominates all!

And a glorious monster all blazing with light

Sweeps thundering past me and into the night—

And my heart is caught up like the dust in its
trail

To join in its journey the Irish Night Mail.

O, it's I that will see at the breaking of day

The summer sun rising o'er fair Dublin Bay,

While the mists of the morning their soft folds
unfurl,

And the light is all shining through mother-of-
pearl.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Then away to the West over bog-land and streams,
To those dim, purple hills and the home of my
dreams—

Oh the sweet airs that stir in the bog-cotton frail—
How it mocks one with visions—the Irish Night
Mail.

The warm summer twilight is fading away,
And the tall hills around me are lonely and gray.
The road winds along between mountains and
lake—

In the little white cabins the lights are awake;
The scent of the turf fires comes to me again
With a sweetness so sweet that it changes to
pain—

And the vision lies dead like the dust on the trail
Of that mighty magician--The Irish Night Mail.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

‘And I saw a new Heaven.’

(*Rev. xxi.*)

(*Balloon Dunlop, No. 1, August, 1913.*)

OH, the wonder~~land~~ of the cloudlands with
their peaks of gleaming snow,
Where the thunderclouds are silver many hundred
feet below.

The dark old Earth has vanished and all the
Heaven is new,
And our little car is hanging in a vault of burning
blue.

The air we breathe is crystal—just melted by the
sun.

In the perfect golden stillness the golden moments
run. ^{below}

Far, far ^{below} the people see the dull grey clouds
go by;

But eternal and immutable is the glory of the
sky.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Beyond the shining mountains a shining ocean
lies,
And faint upon its distant shore new snowy ranges
rise.
Our shadow drifts across the white of a mighty
cloud-alp's face,
And the majesty of silence fills illimitable space.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Anæsthetic.

PUT your hands on my eyes—I no longer would
see
Your beautiful face as it bends over me.

Put your hands on my ears—I no longer would
hear—
For your voice is too sweet and your lips are too
near.

Put your hand on my heart, and its throbbing
shall cease.
And passion shall die in a rapture of peace.

Then hold me, Beloved, a child to your breast,
And in darkness and silence my soul shall find
rest.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

To M. M.

LITTLE lace gown with a girdle of gold,
The summer is past and you're growing old.
When the sun shone brightest on folks in town—
It was then that I wore you, my little lace gown.

You are sweet simplicity, it is true,
But the hand of a master fashioned you,
And economical folk would frown
If they saw the bill for my little lace gown.

When the eyes of a lover on her rest
It is then that a woman looks her best—
Oh the dear dark eyes that on me looked down
When first I wore you, you little lace gown!

Now love may last or love may die
'Neath a summer sun or a winter sky—
But where are they now—those eyes of brown
That liked me best in my little lace gown?

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

They are far away over land and sea,
And I think they will never come back—to me ;
But it's foolish that tears my eyes should drown
As I fold you up softly, my little lace gown.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES

Tables and Chairs.

(*To P. C. M.*)

I NEVER am alone at night
When Mummy and Dad are away,
For then the tables and chairs and things
Are watching me while I play.

I paste my pictures or dress my doll
Or pour out Teddy Bear's tea;
But whenever I look at the tables and chairs
They always are looking at me.

The writing-table is not my friend,
He is much too full of pride,
He is thinking of the important things
He holds in his inside.

The chinese cabinet is so kind—
Although I'm afraid he's sly—
He'd like me to find his secret drawer
If I were allowed to try.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

But the footstool with the little brown legs—
I love him more and more.
It's easier to be friends with him
For he's down so close to the floor.

He doesn't object to being a boat,
Or a table for Dolly's tea;
The others keep watching me at my play,
But the footstool plays with me.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Her Hands.

(To Sister L., Men's Surgical Ward, July 1913.)

I LIKE to watch her beautiful hands,
Slender, flexible, strong as steel,—
In the rubber gloves that fit like skin,—
At pitiful tasks that hurt to heal.

They move like Fate, those beautiful hands,
Firm, relentless, tender, and kind,
Cleansing wounds at which others shrink,
Theirs is the strength that has love behind.

Merciless, merciful, beautiful hands,
Whether they bring relief or pain
Those who have felt their healing touch
Will long, in need, for those hands again.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Good-night in June.

MAY all your dreams be scented by the roses
that will strew
Your path upon the morrow that the dawning
brings for you.

May every path you tread, my dear, be roses all
the way,—
May there be loving hands to strew fresh roses
every day.

May all the roses of your youth when faded still
be sweet,
And may the scent be shared by him who strewed
them at your feet.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Rule Britannia ?

(To the Royal Flying Corps, June 1913.)

THEY earned their rest,—those gallant sons,
in ages far away
Who gave their Mother Isle the seas she's mistress
of to-day.

They bought them for her, wave by wave, with
toil and blood and strife,
And thought it little price to pay,—each noble
reckless life.

But still men die, and women weep,—and shall it
be in vain?

For there's another world to win e'er England
rules again.

A world still mightier than the sea,—it holds the
sea in thrall,—

A world that holds all other worlds, and dominates
them all.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Across the skies of other lands great fleets of air-
craft glide,—
By hundreds can they count their ships,—oh!
where is England's pride?
Where they in hundreds count their ships, England
must count by ten,
In spite of all her boundless wealth, and all her
gallant men.

Oh, sovereign People, rise!—declare, that this your
will shall be.—
Britannia soon shall rule the air as now she rules
the sea.
Lest glories old as well as new for ever pass us
by,—
Tis not for long we'll rule the waves if others
rule the sky.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Underneath are the Everlasting Arms.

(Hymn.)

OH, thou who gavest man the power
Nature's great forces to subdue,
To tame the lightning, cage the winds,
And tunnel mighty mountains through:
Oh, Love Eternal! hear our prayer
For those in peril in the air.

The trackless ocean is our road,
Our paths o'er lonely snow-fields lie;
The deserts 'neath the Eastern sun
Have ways for us to travel by:
Oh, Father! grant thy special care
To those whose ways are through the air.

Unconquered is the awful void,—
Yet teach them, Lord, that nothing harms;
For round them and beneath them there
Are still the Everlasting Arms:
Oh, Love Eternal! hear our prayer
For those in peril in the air.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Lay your head on the Earth's breast . . .

"Have you heard the Earth crying?" said Vassily Vassilvitch.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Why," said he, "I've heard her crying as I lay in the grass with my ear to the ground. I heard her like this: oo-m, oo-m, oo-m. It was the time the soldiers were being mobilised, and women were sobbing in every cottage and in every turning of the road: so it may have been only that I heard. But it seemed to me that the Earth herself was crying, so gently, so sadly, that my own heart ached."

STEPHEN GRAHAM.

*L*AY your head on the Earth's breast and you
will hear her crying.

*Sobbing, softly, hopelessly, for her sons who are
dead and dying.*

Splendid and gay, they are marching still to the
music of bugle and band;

Bravest and best of my beautiful sons they are
going from every land.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Are there none who will stay of all my sons?—
must you all go?

Yes, all that you love, the pride of your eyes.
Mother, you'd have [&]so.

Mangled and torn they lie in heaps, broken, dying
and dead.

Oh, scarlet blood of my splendid sons! you have
dyed my green fields red.

What can I do for you, oh! my sons? My last,
last gift is small,—

A few poor sods to cover your heads, and a
sprinkle of snow ~~o~~ver all.

*Lay your head on the Earth's breast and you will
hear her crying.*

*Grieving, softly, hopelessly, for her sons who are
dead and dying.*

December, 1915.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

‘A Seaplane was sighted to-day
over Nazareth.’

(Daily Paper.)

NEARLY two thousand years ago
From here He watched the summer sky;
His wistful eyes sought through the blue
For grace to live and strength to die.—
What visions must have floated by
Across the skies of Nazareth!

Perhaps He had his boyish dreams
Before too much of grief He knew;
While yet the vision of the Cross
Seemed too far distant to be true,—
I think some magic shadows flew
Across the skies of Nazareth.

Perhaps he saw the fickle crowd
That hailed Him King before He died,
His gentle heart a moment touched
With just a simple human pride;
Or were such dreams to Him denied—
The King Who lived in Nazareth?

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Past, Present, Future are but words
To those Eternity makes wise,—
I think His boyish heart beat fast
And brighter shone those wistful eyes
To see a seaplane cross the skies,
The summer skies of Nazareth.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

The Two Magicians.

LIFE was the Good Magician and the friend,
In happier days, while yet behind the veil
Was hid this Desolation without end,
That broke the sequence of our fairy tale.

There were three sons then, 'once upon a time,'
And one by Life most marvellously crowned,—
There were no heights to which he might not
climb—
All that was best to seek, he sought—and found.

All that was good to have, he had, and gave,
And last his life, so glorious and so sweet;
Now not of Life but Death a boon I crave,
The great Magician with the silent feet.

The kind Magician who will touch my hands,
And also my dull eyes to give them grace;
So that, set free from life's ensorceling bands,
I'll hold my dear again and see his face.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Wood Fires.

‘Ash green,
Fire fit for a Queen.’

(Old saying.)

BEECH-WOOD fires are bright and clear
If the logs are kept a year,
Oaken logs burn steadily
If the wood is old and dry.
Chestnut's only good, they say,
If for long it's laid away.
But ash new or ash old
Is fit for a Queen with a crown of gold.

Birch and fir-logs burn too fast—
Blaze up bright but do not last.
Make a fire of elder-tree
Death within your house you'll see.
It is by the Irish said
Hawthorn bakes the sweetest bread.
But ash green or ash brown
Is fit for a Queen with a golden crown.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Elm-wood burns like Churchyard mould—
E'en the very flames are cold.
Poplar gives a bitter smoke,
Fills your eyes and makes you choke.
Apple-wood will scent your room
With an incense-like perfume.
 But ash wet or ash dry
 For a Queen to warm her slippers by.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Love in Autumn.

I CANNOT give you flowers of spring,
Simple and fresh and pearled with dew,
For gold had touched the summer trees
Before I ever met with you.

I cannot give my vanished youth,
Those years, alas! are past recall;
But what is left is yours in truth,
And one gives much if one gives all.

And lovers in the autumn woods
Find music though the birds are dumb,
For them there is eternal youth
And promise of a spring to come.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

When Love stops Laughing.

WHEN Love stops laughing
Lovers, be wise,
Kneel till he passes,
Hiding your eyes.

Love is a baby breeze,
Wistful and shy,
Touching a flower's face
Soft passing by.

Love is a terrible
Storm wind set free,
Hurling clouds o'er the sky—
Waves o'er the sea.

Warm wings across your heart
Love nestles there.
Tame as a baby bird
Pure as a prayer.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Pinions gigantic
Sweep you away,
Down to the darkest night
Up to the day.

When Love stops laughing,
Soft—hold your breath—
Love sweet and terrible,
Love strong as Death.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Egypt in June.

THE sun in all his splendour in the hot skies
set
Burns down on palm and garden, on tower and
minaret,
But oh for Chartley, the grey skies at Chartley—
The green fields round Chartley,
And the woods all wet.

Broad flows the ancient river—green and gold, it
gleams—
Through dead and living cities as wonderful as
dreams,
But oh for Chartley, the still lake at Chartley—
The cool moat round Chartley,
And the noise of the streams.

The sky is liquid scarlet when the sunset glows,
And fairy mists of gold dust are dancing through
the rose.
But oh for Chartley, the clear skies at Chartley—
The primrose sky at Chartley,
When the daylight goes.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

There are floods of molten silver from a monster
moon,
And faint with their own fragrance the strange
flowers swoon
But oh for Chartley, the sweet airs of Chartley—
Sweetbriar and hay at Chartley,
On a night in June.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

The Castle.

THE scent of burning wood, an arch of stone,
The shining of blue water far below.
Round the great walls the wind is calling lone—
And I am far away and it is long ago :

Stately upon the City's highest hill.
Gleaming and white, a fair new castle stands ;
Down in the distance where the winds are still
Lonely the Dead Sea sleeps amid the sands :

Life is still sweet, not rotten at the core,
As is the fruit of that sad, bitter sea—
But ah!—the one who never any more
Can share the joys that are—the joys to be :

The waters flow from Memory's fountain head
Oft-times at some most slight, mysterious touch.
And happy days we spent with one now dead
Come back to hurt the heart that loves too
much.

THE CASTLE AND OTHER VERSES.

Wood smoke, stone arch, the wind, the shining
sand

And water 'neath the windows far below—
Another castle in another land—

How far away, dear Heart,—how long ago.

The Hospice, Jerusalem, 1920.

